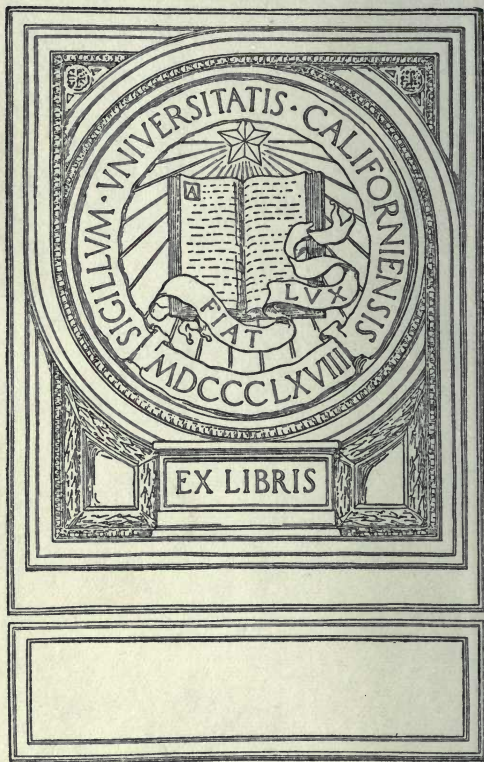


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A Red-Headed Family.

BY

MAURICE THOMPSON.

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A RED-HEADED. FAMILY.

“CE’TINGLY I ken, ce’tingly, seh,” said my Cracker host, taking down his long flint-lock rifle from over the cabin door and slipping his frowzy head through the suspension-strap of his powder-horn and bullet-pouch. “Ce’tingly, seh, I ken cyarry ye ter wha’ them air birds hed their nestis las’ yer.”

I had passed the night in the cabin, and now as I recall the experience to mind, there comes the grateful fragrance of pine wood to emphasize the memory. Corn “pones” and broiled chicken, fried bacon and sweet potatoes, strong coffee and scrambled eggs—a breakfast, indeed, to half persuade one that a Cracker is a *bon vivant*,—had just been eaten. I was standing outside the cabin on the rude door-step. Far off through the thin pine woods to the eastward, where the sun was beginning to flash, a herd of “scrub” cattle were formed into a wide skirmish line of browsers, led by an old cow, whose melancholy bell clanged in time to her desultory movements. Near by, to the westward, lay one of those great gloomy swamps, so common in Southeastern Georgia, so repellant and yet so fascinating, so full of interest to the naturalist, and yet so little explored. The perfume of yellow jasmine was in the air, along with those indescribable

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woody odors which almost evade the sense of smell, and yet so pleasingly impress it. A rivulet, slow, narrow, and deep, passed near the front of the cabin, with a faint, dreamy murmur and crept darkling into the swamp between dense brakes of cane, and bay-bushes.

"Ye-as, seh, I ken mek er bee-line to that air ole pine snag. Hit taint more'n er half er mile out yender," continued my host and volunteer guide, as we climbed the little worm-fence that inclosed the house; "but I allus called 'em air birds woodcocks; didn't know 'at they hed any other name; allus thut 'at a Peckwood wer' a leetle, tinty, striped feller; never hyeard er them air big ole woodcocks a bein' called Peckwoods."

He led and I followed into the damp, moss-scented shadows of the swamp, under cypress and live-oak and through slender fringes of cane. We floundered across the coffee-colored stream, the water cooling my India-rubber wading-boots above the knees, climbed over great walls of fallen tree-boles, crept under low-hanging festoons of wild vines, and at length found ourselves wading rather more than ankle-deep in one of those shallow cypress lakes of which the larger part of the Okefenokee region is formed. I thought it a very long half-mile before we reached a small tussock whereon grew, in the midst of a dense underbrush thicket, some enormous pine trees.

"Ther'," said the guide, "thet air snag air the one. Sorter on ter tother side ye'll see the hole, 'bout twenty foot up. Kem yer, I'll show hit ter ye."

The "snag" was a stump some fifty feet tall, barkless, smooth, almost as white as chalk, the decaying remnant of what had once been the grandest pine on the tussock.

"Hello, yer'! Hit's ben to work some more sence I wer' yer' las' time. Hit air done dug another hole!"

As he spoke he pointed indicatively, with his long, knotty fore-finger. I looked and saw two large round cavities, not unlike immense auger-holes, running darkly into the polished surface of the stump, one about six feet below the other, the lower twenty-five feet above the ground. Surely it was no very striking picture, this bare, weather-whitened column, with its splintered top and its two orifices, and yet I do not think it was a weakness for me to feel a thrill of delight as I gazed at it. How long and how diligently I had sought the home of *Campephilus principalis*, the great king of the red-headed family, and at last I stood before its door!

At my request, the kind Cracker now left me alone to prosecute my observations.

"Be in ter dinner?" he inquired as he turned to go.

"No; supper," I responded.

"Well, tek cyare ev yerself," and off he went into the thickest part of the cypress.

I waited awhile for the solitude to regain its equilibrium after the slashing tread of my friend had passed out of hearing; then I stole softly to the stump and tapped on it with the handle of my knife. This I repeated several times. *Campephilus* was not at home, for if he had been I should have seen a long, strong, ivory-white beak thrust out of the hole up there,

followed by a great red-crested head turned sidewise so as to let fall upon me the glint of an iris unequalled by that of any other bird in the world. He had gone out early. I should have to wait and watch; but first I satisfied myself by a simple method that my watching would probably not be in vain. A little examination of the ground at the base of the stump showed me a quantity of fresh wood-fragments, not unlike very coarse saw-dust, scattered over the surface. This assured me that one of the excavations above was a new one, and that a nest was either building or had been finished but a short while. So I hastily hid myself on a log in a clump of bushes, distant from the stump about fifty feet, whence I could plainly see the holes.

One who has never been out alone in a Southern swamp can have no fair understanding of its loneliness, solemnity and funereal sadness of effect. Even in the first gush of Spring—it was now about the sixth of April—I felt the weight of something like eternity in the air—not the eternity of the future but the eternity of the past. Everything around me appeared old, sleepy, and musty, despite the fresh buds, tassels, and flower-spikes. What can express dreariness so effectually as the long moss of those damp woods? I imagined that the few little birds I saw flitting here and there in the tree tops were not so noisy and joyous as they would be when, a month later, their northward migration should bring them into our greening Northern woods. As the sun mounted, however, a cheerful twitter ran with the gentle breeze through the bay thickets and magnolia clumps, and I recognized a num-

ber of familiar voices; then suddenly the gavel of *Campephilus* sounded sharp and strong a quarter-mile away. A few measured raps, followed by a rattling drum-call, a space of silence rimmed with receding echoes, and then a trumpet-note, high, full, vigorous, almost startling, cut the air with a sort of broadsword sweep. Again the long-roll answered, from a point nearer me, by two or three hammer-like raps on the resonant branch of some dead cypress-tree. The king and queen were coming to their palace. I waited patiently, knowing that it was far beyond my power to hurry their movements. It was not long before one of the birds, with a rapid cackling that made the wood rattle, came over my head, and went straight to the stump, where it lit, just below the lower hole, clinging gracefully to the trunk. It was a superb specimen—the female, and I suspected that she had come to leave an egg. I could have killed her easily with the little sixteen-gauge breech-loader at my side, but I would not have done the act for all the stuffed birds in the country. I had come as a visitor to this palace, with the hope of making the acquaintance I had so long desired, and not as an assassin. She was quite unaware of me, and so behaved naturally, her large gold-amber eyes glaring with that wild sincerity of expression seen in the eyes of but few savage things.

After a little while the male came bounding through the air, with that vigorous galloping flight common to all our woodpeckers, and lit on a fragmentary projection at the top of the stump. He showed larger than his mate, and his aspect was more fierce, almost savage.

The green-black feathers near his shoulders, the snow-white lines down his neck, and the tall red crest on his head, all shone with great brilliancy, whilst his ivory beak gleamed like a dagger. He soon settled for me a question which had long been in my mind. With two or three light preliminary taps on a hard heart-pine splinter, he proceeded to beat the regular woodpecker drum-call—that long rolling rattle made familiar to us all by the common red-head (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and our other smaller woodpeckers. This peculiar call is not, in my opinion, the result of elasticity or springiness in the wood upon which it is performed, but is effected by a rapid, spasmodic motion of the bird's head, imparted by a voluntary muscular action. I have seen the common Red-head make a soundless call on a fence-stake where the decaying wood was scarcely hard enough to prevent the full entrance of his beak. His head went through the same rapid vibration, but no sound accompanied the performance. Still, it is resonance in the wood that the bird desires, and it keeps trying until a good sounding-board is found.

It was very satisfying to me when the superb King of the Woodpeckers—*pic noir à bec blanc*, as the great French naturalist named it—went over the call, time after time, with grand effect, letting go, between trials, one or two of his triumphant trumpet-notes. Hitherto I had not seen the *Campephilus* do this, though I had often heard what I supposed to be the call. As I crouched in my hiding-place and furtively watched the proceedings, I remember comparing the birds and their dwelling to some half-savage lord and lady and their isolated

castle of medieval days. A twelfth-century bandit nobleman might have gloried in triggling himself in such apparel as my ivory-billed woodpecker wore. What a perfect athlete he appeared to be, as he braced himself for an effort which was to generate a force sufficient to hurl his heavy head and beak back and forth at a speed of about twenty-eight strokes to the second!

All of our woodpeckers, pure and simple—that is, all of the species in which the woodpecker character has been preserved almost unmodified—have exceedingly muscular heads and strikingly constricted necks; their beaks are nearly straight, wedge-shaped, fluted or ribbed on the upper mandible, and their nostrils are protected by hairy or feathery tufts. Their legs are strangely short in appearance, but are exactly adapted to their need, and their tail-feathers are tipped with stiff points. These features are all fully developed in the *Campephilus principalis*, the bill especially showing a size, strength and symmetrical beauty truly wonderful.

The stiff pointed tail-feathers of the woodpecker serve the bird a turn which I have never seen noted by any ornithologist. When the bird must strike a hard blow with its bill, it does not depend solely upon its neck and head; but, bracing the points of its tail-feathers against the tree, and rising to the full length of its short, powerful legs, and drawing back its body, head, and neck to the farthest extent, it dashes its bill home with all the force of its entire bodily weight and muscle. I have seen the ivory-bill, striking thus, burst off from almost flinty-hard dead trees frag-

ments of wood half as large as my hand ; and once in the Cherokee hills of Georgia I watched a pileated woodpecker (*Hylotomus pileatus*) dig a hole to the very heart of an exceedingly tough, green, mountain hickory tree, in order to reach a nest of winged ants. The point of ingress of the insects was a small hole in a punk knot ; but the bird, by hopping down the tree tail-foremost and listening, located the nest about five feet below, and there it proceeded to bore through the gnarled, cross-grained wood to the hollow.

Of all our wild American birds, I have studied no other one which combines all of the elements of wildness so perfectly in its character as does the ivory-billed woodpecker. It has no trace whatever in its nature of what may be called a tameable tendency. Savage liberty is a prerequisite of its existence and its home is the depths of the woods, remotest from the activities of civilized man. It is a rare bird, even in the most favorable regions, and it is almost impossible to get specimens of its eggs. Indeed, I doubt if there are a dozen cabinets in all the world containing these eggs ; but they are almost exactly similar in size, color and shape to those of *Hylotomus pileatus*, the only difference being that the latter are, upon close examination, found to be a little shorter, and, as I have imagined, a shade less semi-transparent porcelain-white, if I may so express it.

The visit of my birds to their home in the stump lasted nearly two hours. The female went into and out of the hole several times before she finally settled herself, as I suppose, on her nest. When she came forth at

the end of thirty or forty minutes, she appeared exceedingly happy, cackling in a low, harsh, but rather wheedling voice, and evidently anxious to attract the attention of the male, who in turn treated her with lofty contempt. To him the question of a new egg was not worth considering. But when she at last turned away from him, and mounting into the air, galloped off into the solemn gloom of the cypress wood, he followed her, trumpeting at the top of his voice.

Day after day I returned to my hiding-place to renew my observations, and, excepting a visitation of mosquitoes now and then, nothing occurred to mar my enjoyment. As the weather grew warmer the flowers and leaves came on apace, and the swamp became a vast wilderness of perfume and contrasting colors. Bird songs from migrating warblers, vireos, finches and other happy sojourners for a day (or mayhap they were all nesting there, I cannot say, for I had larger fish to fry), shook the wide silence into sudden resonance. Along the sluggish little stream between the cane-brakes, the hermit-thrush and the cat-bird were met by the green heron and the belted kingfisher. The snake-bird, too, that veritable water-dragon of the South, was there, wriggling and squirming in the amber-brown pools amongst the lily-pads and lettuce.

At last, one morning, my woodpeckers discovered me in my hiding-place; and that was the end of all intimacy between us. Thenceforth my observations were few and at a long distance. No amount of cunning could serve me any turn. Go as early as I might, and hide as securely as I could, those great yellow eyes

quickly espied me, and then there would be a rapid and long flight away into the thickest and most difficult part of the swamp.

I confess that it was with no little debate that I reached the determination that it was my duty to rob that nest in the interest of knowledge. It was the first opportunity I ever had had to examine an occupied nest of the *Campephilus principalis*, and I felt that it was scarcely probable that I should ever again be favored with such a chance. With the aid of my Cracker host, I erected a rude ladder and climbed up to the hole. It was almost exactly circular, and nearly five inches in diameter. With a little axe I began breaking and hacking away the crust of hard outer wood. The cavity descended with a slightly spiral course, widening a little as it proceeded. I had followed it nearly five feet when I found a place where it was contracted again, and immediately below was a sudden expansion, at the bottom of which was the nest. Five beautiful pure white eggs of the finest old-china appearance, delicate, almost transparent, exceedingly fragile, and, to the eyes of a collector, vastly valuable, lay in a shallow bowl of fine chips. But in breaking away the last piece of wood-crust, I jerked it a little too hard, and those much coveted prizes rolled out and fell to the ground. Of course they were "hopelessly crushed," and my feelings with them. I would willingly have fallen in their stead, if the risk could have saved the eggs. I descended ruefully enough, hearing as I did so the loud cry of *Campephilus* battling around in the jungle. Once or twice more I went back to the spot in early morning, but my birds did

not appear. I made minute examination of the rifled nest, and also tore out the other excavation, so as to compare the two. They were very much alike, especially in the jug-shape of their lower ends. From a careful study of all the holes (apparently made by *Campephilus*) that I have been able to find and reach in either standing or fallen trees, I am led to believe that this jug-shape is peculiar to the ivory-bill's architecture, as I have never found it in the excavations of other species, save where the form was evidently the result of accident. The depth of the hole varies from three to seven feet, as a rule, but I found one that was nearly nine feet deep and another that was less than two. Our smaller woodpeckers, including *Hylotomus pileatus*, usually make their excavations in the shape of a gradually widening pocket, of which the entrance is the narrowest part.

It is curious to note that—beginning with the ivory-bill and coming down the line of species in the scale of size—we find the red mark on the head rapidly falling away from a grand scarlet crest some inches in height to a mere touch of carmine, or dragon's blood, on crown, nape, cheek, or chin. The lofty and brilliant head-plume of the ivory-bill, his powerful beak, his semi-circular claws and his perfectly spiked tail, as well as his superiority of size and strength, indicate that he is what he is, the original type of the woodpecker, and the one pure species left to us in America. He is the only woodpecker which eats insects and larvæ (dug out of rotten wood) exclusively. Neither the sweetest fruits nor the oiliest grains can tempt him to depart one line from his heredi-

tary habit. He accepts no gifts from man, and asks no favors. But the pileated woodpecker, just one remove lower in the scale of size, strength, and beauty, shows a little tendency towards a grain and fruit diet, and it also often descends to old logs and fallen boughs for its food—a thing never thought of by the ivory-bill. As for the rest of the red-headed family, they are degenerate species, though lively, clever, and exceedingly interesting. What a sad dwarf the little downy woodpecker is when compared with the ivory-bill! and yet to my mind it is clear that *Picus pubescens* is the degenerate off-shoot from the grand *campephilus* trunk.

Our red-headed woodpecker (*M. erythrocephalus*) is a genuine American in every sense, a plausible, querulous, aggressive, enterprising, crafty fellow, who tries every mode of getting a livelihood, and always with success. He is a wood-pecker, a nut-eater, a cider-taster, a judge of good fruits, a connoisseur of corn, wheat, and melons, and an expert fly-catcher as well. As if to correspond with his versatility of habit, his plumage is divided into four regular masses of color. His head and neck are crimson, his back, down to secondaries, a brilliant black, tinged with green or blue in the gloss; then comes a broad girdle of pure white, followed by a mass of black at the tail and wing-tips. He readily adapts himself to the exigencies of civilized life. I prophecy that, within less than a hundred years to come, he will be making his nest on the ground, in hedges or in the crotches of orchard trees. Already he has begun to push his way out into our smaller Western prairies, where there is no

dead timber for him to make his nest-holes in. I found a compromise-nest between two fence-rails in Illinois, which was probably a fair index of the future habit of the red-head. It was formed by pecking away the inner sides of two vertical parallel rails, just above a horizontal one, upon which, in a cup of pulverized wood, the eggs were laid. This was in the prairie country between two vast fields of Indian corn.

The power of sight exhibited by the red-headed woodpecker is quite amazing. I have seen the bird, in the early twilight of a summer evening, start from the highest spire of a very tall tree, and fly a hundred yards straight to an insect near the ground. He catches flies on the wing with as deft a turn as does the great-crested fly-catcher. It is not my purpose to offer any ornithological theories in this paper; but I cannot help remarking that the farther a species of woodpecker departs from the feeding-habit of the ivory-bill, the more broken up are its color-masses, and the more diffused or degenerate becomes the typical red tuft on the head. The golden-winged woodpecker (*Colaptes auratus*), for instance, feeds much on the ground, eating earth-worms, seeds, beetles, etc.; and we find him taking on the colors of the ground-birds with a large loss of the characteristic woodpecker arrangement of plumage and color-masses. He looks much more like a meadow-lark than like an ivory-bill! The red appears in a delicate crescent, barely noticeable on the back of the head, and its bill is slender, curved, and quite unfit for hard pecking. On the other hand, the downy woodpecker and the hairy woodpecker, having kept well in the line of the typical feeding

habit, though seeking their food in places beneath the notice of their great progenitor, have preserved in a marked degree an outline of the ivory-bill's color-masses, degenerate though they are. The dwarfish, insignificant looking *Picus pubescens* pecking away at the stem of a dead iron-weed to get the minute larvæ that may be imbedded in the pith, when compared with *Campephilus principalis* drumming on the bole of a giant cypress-tree, is like a Digger Indian when catalogued in a column with men like Goethe and Gladstone, Napoleon and Lincoln.

I have been informed that the ivory-bill is occasionally found in the Ohio valley; but I have never been able to discover it north of the Cumberland range of mountains. It is a swamp bird, or rather it is the bird of the high timber that grows in low wet soil. Its principal food is a large flat-headed timber-worm, known in the South as *borer* or *saw-worm*, which it discovers by ear and reaches by diligent and tremendously effective pecking. A Cracker deer-stalker, whom I met at Black-shear, Georgia, gave an amusing account of an experience he had had in the swamps. He said:

"I had turned in late, and got to sleep on a tussock under a big pine, an' slep' tell sun-up. Wull, es ther' I laid flat er my back an' er snorin' away, kerwhack sumpen tuck me in the face an' eyes, jes' like spankin' er baby, an' I wuk up with er gret chunk er woodercross my nose, an' er blame ole woodcock jest er whangin' erway up in thet pine. My nose hit bled an' bled, an' I hed er good mint er shoot thet air bird, but I cudn't stan' the

expense er the thing. Powder'n' lead air mighty costive. Anyhow I don't s'pose 'at the ole woodcock knowed at hit 'd drapped thet air fraygment onto me. Ef hit 'd er 'peared like's ef hit wer' 'joyin' the joke any, I wud er shot hit all ter pieces ef I'd er hed ter lived on turpentine all winter!"

Of the American woodpecker there are more than thirty varieties, I believe, nearly every one of which bears some trace of the grand scarlet crown of the great ivory-billed king of them all. The question arises—and I shall not attempt to answer it—whether the ivory-bill is an example of the highest development, from the downy woodpecker, say, or whether all these inferior species and varieties are the result of degeneracy? Neither Darwin nor Wallace has given us the key that certainly unlocks this very interesting mystery.

The sap-drinking woodpeckers (*Sphyrapicus*), of which there are three or four varieties in this country, appear to form the link between the fruit-eating and the non-fruit-eating species of the red-headed family. From sipping the sap of the sugar-maple to testing the flavor of a cherry, a service-berry, or a haw-apple, is a short and delightfully natural step. How logical, too, for a bird, when once it has acquired the fruit-eating habit, to quit delving in the hard green wood for a nectar so much inferior to that which may be had ready bottled in the skins of apples, grapes, and berries! In accordance with this rule, *M. erythrocephalus* and *Centurus carolinus*, though great tipplers, are too lazy or too wise to bore the maples, preferring to sit on the edge of a sugar-trough, furtively drinking therefrom

leisurely draughts of the saccharine blood of the ready-tapped trees. I have seen them with their bills stained purple to the nostrils with the rich juice of the blackberry, and they quarrel from morning till night over the ripest June-apples and reddest cherries, their noise making a Bedlam of the fairest country orchard.

The woodpecker family is scattered widely in our country. In the West Canadian woods one meets, besides a number of the commoner species, Lewis' woodpecker, a large, beautiful, and rare bird. The California species include the Nuttall, the Harris, the Cape St. Lucas, the white-headed, and several other varieties, all showing more or less kinship to the ivory-bill. Lewis's woodpecker shows almost entirely black, its plumage giving forth a strong greenish or bluish lustre. The red on its head is softened down to a fine rose-carmine. It is a wild, wary bird, flying high, combining in its habits the traits of both *Hylotomus pileatus* and *Campephilus principalis*.

In concluding this paper a general description of the male ivory-bill may prove acceptable to those who may never be able to see even a stuffed specimen of a bird which, taken in every way, is, perhaps, the most interesting and beautiful in America. In size 21 inches long, and 33 in alar extent; bill, ivory white, beautifully fluted above, and two and a-half inches long; head-tuft, or crest, long and fine, of pure scarlet faced with black. Its body-color is glossy blue-black, but down its slender neck on each side, running from the crest to the back, a pure white stripe contrasts vividly with the scarlet and ebony. A mass

of white runs across the back when the wings are closed, as in *M. erythrocephalus*, leaving the wing-tips and tail black. Its feet are ash-blue, its eyes amber-yellow. The female is like the male, save that she has a black crest instead of the scarlet. I can think of nothing in Nature more striking than the flash of color this bird gives to the dreary swamp-landscape, as it careers from tree to tree, or sits upon some high skeleton cypress-branch and plies its resounding blows. The species will probably be extinct within a few years.*

* Since writing the foregoing, I have made several excursions in search of the ivory-bill. Early in January, 1885, I killed a fine male specimen in a swamp near Bay St. Louis, Mississippi; but was prevented, by an accident, from preserving it or making a sketch of it.

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The following extract from a letter from the well-known Author and Artist PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON appeared in a recent number of the *New York Publishers' Weekly*:

"I saw by the advertisements in American periodicals that a New York pirate had got hold of 'An Intellectual Life.' We sadly need a copyright law. It would be a benefit to all honest men, including American authors who would be spared part of the rivalry produced by flooding the States with cheap pirated reprints. Yours very truly, P. G. HAMERTON."

To which I beg leave to reply as follows:

DEAR SIR,—The above note evidently refers to me, as I am the one publisher who has reprinted the work referred to at a low price. Of course it warms the blood, a little, of an honest man, to have another honest man call him a knave. When discussion gets to that point, argument is cut off. I will, however, make a few points on my side of the case.

First.—I am, and long have been, heartily in favor of giving authors the control of their productions upon *their own terms*, within the limits of the bounds of common sense—it would hardly be practicable for us to pay copyright to Homer, and it may be an open question as to when Macaulay's heirs should cease to receive their tax; there is, of course, *some* limit; honest "doctors disagree" as to points of equity, expediency, and the best methods of bringing a happy future out of the evil present.

Second.—The laws of this country (and I believe the same is true of all countries) are not as you and other authors desire they should be. Evidently too, it is quite as useless for authors to expect to get what they want *without a CHANGE in the laws*, as to hope to reach the result by calling publishers bad names. Where is the common sense of characterizing me as "pirate" because I multiply (within the bounds of law and of custom since the time of Cadmus) copies of your book from the copy I bought and paid for, more than in applying the same term to one who *reads the book* aloud to a dozen friends, who consequently do not buy it—or more than applying it to *YOU* for appropriating the language and thoughts of the patriarch Job in one of your books without giving him any payment—you give "credit," doubtless, to the authors whom you quote, but you give them no pay,—I give *YOU* credit, but no "pay" beyond the copy I buy, *till we are able to secure a change in the present unsatisfactory laws.*

Third.—General Grant once said, "The best way to get rid of a bad law is to enforce it;" that is my theory, and I shall continue to practice upon it. I expect to aid in securing to you by "enforcement" of the legitimate consequences of the present laws, what authors would never get by whining or growling. Some people give to my methods the credit of being, possibly, the largest single influence which is working in this country to bring about the much desired change in the laws.

Fourth.—While authors certainly have their "rights," readers have some rights also. When I was a boy under fourteen years of age the good literature accessible to me was limited, nearly, to Murray's English Reader, and Josephus' Works. I do not pretend to be the reader's especial champion, but I *DO* look at the question of the "intellectual life" for them from their standpoint as well as from that of the author—and it is *amazing* to me that an author of your high character, intellectual, humane and Christian (whose inspiring words "The humblest subscriber to a mechanics' institute has easier access to sound learning than had either Solomon or Aristotle," I have placed before millions of readers)—that you should seem to take no pleasure in the fact that the best literature of the world has by my efforts been placed within the reach of millions to whom it was before unattainable; that I give to *YOU* an appreciative audience (far more appreciative than you find among your wealthy patrons) among tens of thousands, who with-

PIRATES AND AUTHORS.—Continued.

out my efforts would never have known you. I say readers have rights as well as authors; what they are I will not discuss; I say, simply, let the laws be changed as authors demand; while Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Lamb are free to readers, any "monopoly" which living authors can secure upon their own writings will not seriously hurt readers—and, furthermore, folly in law-making, if foolish changes should be made, would be likely soon to work its own cure, in this age of the printing press.

Finally.—Hamerton's "Intellectual Life" ought to sell by the hundred thousand—ought to sell a hundred where it has sold *one* by the methods of your approved publishers; when the "good time coming" is here, and authors can make their own terms with publishers and the public, perhaps you will give me a little credit and thanks for the *LARGER* audience you will then have because of my present "piracy." Respectfully, JOHN B. ALDEN.

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